

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-62 be amended in Clause 2 by striking out lines 7 to 9 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

“(b) the capture, storage, organization, modification, retrieval, or other processing of intelligence or”.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this amendment refers to the general interpretation section of Bill C-62. Under clause 2 we find a definition for exempt transmission apparatus:

“exempt transmission apparatus” means any apparatus whose functions are limited to one or more of the following:

- (a) the switching of telecommunications,
- (b) the input, capture, storage, organization, modification, retrieval, output or other processing of intelligence, or
- (c) control of the speed, code, protocol, content, format, routing or similar aspects of the transmission of intelligence;

It goes on with a number of other definitions.

Subclause 2(b) of that definition I found to be quite problematical. I guess it would be up to legal interpretation. The reason for suggesting this amendment is to get away from what I consider a problematic definition taken in light of what we can call the provision of basic services in the industry.

Take the words input and output. An input device or mechanism or an output mechanism for that matter may or could be interpreted as being the transmission facility or the line carrying that message.

There has been some concern in the industry regarding the whole problem of the provision of services from the telephone company into the private residence such as the line services coming basically from the telephone pole into the commercial or private residence.

My concern is if input and output could be looked at as being the provision of that line facility then by defining input or output as being an exempt transmission apparatus it may alter the obligations of the telephone companies such as BC Tel or Bell Canada to provide, as they

historically have done, these kinds of services to the residential or commercial consumer.

This could well be a topic for debate, but I think that by deleting references to input and output we would still provide the authority to the CRTC to regulate the installation and maintenance of inside wiring and wiring located on the premises of the user in terms of the current provision of basic services.

When a person is constructing a home, for example, the telephone company will come in and provide that wiring. It is part of the service package when the consumer hooks up to the private line or party line whatever the case may be.

• (1545)

What worries me is the telephone companies may say that because this is an exempt apparatus or an exempt facility under the new legislation they no longer have to provide it. Therefore if we want telephone service in our homes we are going to have to pay the cost of the line installation. That cost can range from a couple of hundred dollars for a complex installation to substantially more for a commercial installation. By deleting these references the CRTC would still be provided with the authority to regulate installation and maintenance of apparatus located inside the premises of users.

It is my understanding the CRTC currently has before it an application from BC Tel on this very matter. Telephone companies are trying to cut costs. I do not blame them. They face a difficult situation. I talked earlier about where BC Tel has had to lay off some 820 employees because of the new competitive environment in the long distance market. Granted they were temporary employees, but many of them had been there for a considerable amount of time.

The fact is we now have Unitel coming in and creaming off the profits in the long distance market, forcing BC Tel and other telecoms to lower their long distance rates and therefore lower their profits on long distance rates which have traditionally gone into the provision of local telephone service. The profits from long distance have cross-subsidized for example the cost of providing inside wiring for residential consumers.

It is understandable that businesses like BC Tel or Bell Canada would come before the CRTC and say: “We do not want to have to provide this any longer. We just want to be able to provide the service to the telephone pole closest to the property line”. If we in fact encourage that through this exemption clause in the current bill by saying input and output, granted it may be a debatable